



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Commission on Children



**Testimony before the Education Committee on Raised H.B. 5308 and H.B. 5306
Submitted by Steven Hernández, Director of Public Policy and Research
Connecticut Commission on Children
February 24, 2016**

Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, Ranking Members and Members of the Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on these proposals before you. My name is Steven Hernández. I am the Director of Public Policy and Research of the CT Commission on Children and I am here today to speak in favor of:

- H.B. No. 5308 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING A GENERAL EDUCATION MULTITIERED SYSTEM OF INSTRUCTION AND SUPPORTS.
- H.B. No. 5306 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.

H.B. No. 5308 (Raised) An Act Concerning A General Education Multitiered System Of Instruction And Supports

The Commission on Children supports SDE's review and revision of the 2008 version of the department's framework for response to intervention entitled "Using Scientific Research-Based Interventions: Improving Education for All Students.

Bills can guide and they can teach, and your bill teaches us that building and promoting positive school climate and culture is a cornerstone to learning. We also know that effectively tiered interventions and supports rely as much on the schoolwide tier one systems as they do on tier 2 and 3 interventions for children and youth at risk. Tier one supports that include standards, social and emotional

learning, respect for difference, and equity must be accompany the so-called hard skills like literacy and numeracy in order to ensure that we provide opportunities to learn and grow for the whole child.

I've attached to my testimony an article from the National School Climate Center describing the importance of school climate standards very similar to what you have proposed studied in your bill. I would also commend to your attention an article entitled "Promoting Social and Emotional Learning," to be found on the website of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, that elegantly describes the need for social and emotional development and learning in improving school climate and academic outcomes.

In CT, these concepts work best where and when they work together.

H.B. No. 5306 (Raised) An Act Concerning Recommendations Of The Office Of Early Childhood

Regarding RB 5306, An Act Concerning Recommendations of the Office of Early Childhood, there is an expansion of Care 4Kids eligibility, largely coming from the guidance and requirements of the federal government.

Quality early care is critical to help children thrive and parents work. We should welcome this expansion. For those who say we cannot afford to expand eligibility, we disagree. We cannot afford to keep parents from working or becoming educated. That is the real cost that harms our state.

Perhaps we should revisit our TANF expenditures to pay for expanding early care, so we do not unnecessarily pit one cohort of parents (homeless, working poor, those who wish to further education to increase their low wages), against another. It is permitted to transfer dollars from TANF to CCDBG and this would be a laudable use of some of our federal funds.

While the Commission supports the proposal to increase support for home-based care, after all this is where our toddlers in need are being cared for, the Commission on Children is concerned about Section 6 of RB5306, which moves away from our regional accreditation projects. These projects have been most successful in bolstering quality in our state for young children by helping sites

become NAEYC accredited. Not all early care is the same. The research informs us that good early care helps children.

NAEYC is a strong quality control measure in early childhood. Connecticut has the third largest number of NAEYC accredited child care centers in the nation. This is due to the accreditation project.

Thank you for your time.

